

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING ACT TEST ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE ACT FOR TENNESSEE STATEWIDE TEST – SPRING 2009

RECEIPT DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 2, 2009

HOW TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS

NOTE: ACT provides test accommodations in accordance with Title III of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Schools provide accommodations under different regulations. Thus, having a diagnosis and receiving accommodations in school do not guarantee ACT approval of those accommodations.

Two **different** forms are available to request accommodations for the ACT. Review the information below to determine which **one** of these forms to complete for each student.

You may download extra forms from:

<http://www.state.tn.us/education/assessment/ACTtesting.shtml>

1. ACT-Approved Accommodations: Complete a Request for ACT-Approved Test Accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities who are receiving special education services described in a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. ACT-Approved Accommodations are not available for students solely on the basis of limited English proficiency. **ACT must receive the forms by February 2, 2009.**
2. State-Allowed Accommodations: Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements stated below (or whose request for ACT-Approved Accommodations is denied) may apply for State-Allowed Accommodations by submitting an Application for State-Allowed Accommodations by March 6, 2009.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for ACT-Approved Accommodations, students must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

1. Professionally Diagnosed Disability. The student's disability must have been professionally diagnosed by a qualified professional, or team of professionals, whose credentials are appropriate to the disability. Current written diagnostic documentation of the disability must be on file at school and must meet **ALL** the "Guidelines for Documentation" on page 2.
 - If diagnosed for the **FIRST** time before September 2005, reconfirmation is required within the last 3 years. A current IEP or 504 Plan on file at the public school may serve as reconfirmation, provided the initial diagnosis was made by a qualified professional(s).
 - If **FIRST** diagnosed within the last 3 years, complete written diagnostic documentation must be submitted *with* the request form.
2. The current IEP or 504 Plan must document **ALL** accommodations requested are provided in school. Submit a copy of the student's *current* IEP or *current* 504 Plan that supports the need for all requested accommodations due to the disability. The student's name and effective dates of the IEP or 504 Plan must appear on all pages submitted. If the plan has been in place less than 3 years, full diagnostic documentation is required.

AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTATION

Schools are required to provide the necessary information and documentation to support requests for test accommodations. The Tennessee Department of Education has authorized ACT to collect and review this documentation. All documentation provided to ACT will be kept confidential, and will not become part of the student's ACT score record.

EXAMPLES OF TEST ACCOMMODATIONS

Regular Type and Standard Time. If a student can test in a single session with standard time limits (including standard break) and use a regular (10-point) test booklet, but the disability requires other accommodations, ***the school may make such arrangements for the ACT, without prior consultation with ACT.*** Examples include, but are not limited to:

- assignment to a wheelchair accessible room,
- permission for diabetics to eat snacks,
- permission to use Irlen filters or color overlays.

Examples of accommodations for students with hearing impairments that do not require time extensions or ACT approval include:

- a sign language interpreter (not a relative) to sign all spoken instructions (not the test items),
- seating near the front of the room to lip-read spoken instructions,
- a written copy of spoken instructions with visual notification from testing staff of test start, five minutes remaining, and stop times.

Large Type and Standard Time. If a student can test with standard time limits (including standard break) but needs a large type (18-point) test booklet, the school must submit a completed request form specifying the accommodations requested.

Extended Time and/or Alternate Formats. If the student's professionally diagnosed and documented disability requires one or more of the accommodations below, the school must submit a completed request form:

- more than standard time
- testing over multiple days
- additional or stop-the-clock breaks
- alternate test formats such as Braille, audiocassette or audio DVD, or a reader, and/or alternate response modes.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING REQUESTS

To be considered for ACT testing, requests and all required documentation for ACT-Approved Accommodations must be **received by ACT no later than February 2, 2009.** The Test Accommodations Coordinator at each school is responsible for gathering all completed requests and submitting them as a group by the deadline *with* a completed Test Accommodations Coordinator Header to:

ACT State Test Accommodations - TN
301 ACT Drive
PO Box 4071
Iowa City, IA 52243-4071
Phone: 319/337-1788 (voice)
8:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M., central time, M-F
E-mail: tntest@act.org

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE REQUEST FORM AND PROVIDING REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

A school official such as a counselor, special education teacher, or principal is to complete a form for **each** student for whom accommodations are requested. **The form may be photocopied as needed.** The request form will NOT be processed if it is missing required information or signatures or is received after the deadline. If any of the information provided is false, ACT reserves the right to cancel scores.

NOTE: The most frequent reason accommodations are not approved is incomplete or inaccurate information on the request form. Please read and follow instructions carefully.

SIDE 1

- A. Student Information.** Student address is required.
- B. Diagnosed Disability.** Check all applicable disabilities as stated in written documentation on file at the school.
- C. Test Format Requested.** Documentation of a visual disability is required to support requests for large type test booklets. Both scannable and large block answer sheets are provided with each large type booklet. The type of materials ordered must be supported by the accommodations plan at school or on a previous "ACT Accommodations Approval" letter for this student.
- IMPORTANT—Audio DVD.** Examinees using audio DVDs may test as a group, if they can control the progress of their own players, use their own headphones, and begin each test at the same time. Before requesting this format, check with technical personnel at your school to determine equipment and software requirements. **We encourage you to order a practice version of the tests on audio DVD so that you are familiar with how they operate and can work with technical personnel at your school to resolve any issues prior to testing.** We will also provide guidelines with each set of DVDs. Plan to have students take the practice tests so they can learn how the DVDs work and how to use the controls to navigate through the tests.
- D. Time Requested.** Mark the option most similar to the accommodations normally provided at school. ACT will assign a timing code based on the disability and approved test format.
- E. Other Accommodations Requested.** If needed due to the disability, explain in detail and submit supporting documentation. Complete only if other accommodations are requested.

SIDE 2

- F. Previous Approval of the Same Accommodations on the ACT.** Mark the appropriate answer. If yes, providing the student's Social Security Number will speed processing of this request. If no, complete both sides of the request and submit required documentation.
- G. Specific Disability or Condition.** Must be specific. Follow the instructions on the form. The following terms are **not** sufficient: specific learning disabilities, other health impaired, perceptual communication disorder, auditory processing disorder, etc. For learning disabilities, please use the DSM-IV diagnoses, if available, as stated on the documentation from the diagnosing professional.
- H. History of Diagnosis.** The diagnosing professional's credentials must be appropriate to the disability. If the disability was identified by an IEP team, list relevant titles and specializations.

H-a. If **FIRST** diagnosed before grade 9, complete only the "age or grade of student" when diagnosed. **If FIRST diagnosis was within the last 3 years, submit complete diagnostic documentation with the request form** (see "Guidelines for Documentation" on this page).

H-b. If **recently re-confirmed**, there must be a **reconfirmation within the last 3 years** by a psychologist, learning disabilities specialist/team, or other qualified professional, or team of professionals, with direct knowledge of the student's disability. A current IEP or 504 Plan on file at the public school may serve as reconfirmation.

- I. Current IEP or 504 Plan on File at School.** Indicate the type of accommodations plan now on file at the school and attach the required copy. The student's name and effective dates of the IEP or 504 Plan must appear on all submitted pages.
- J. School Official's Signature.** Read and sign the statement. A relative of the student may *not* sign.
- K. Student/Parent Signature.** *If the student is 18 or older, the student must sign. If the student is younger than 18, his/her parent or legal guardian must sign.* School official may sign for the parent if approval has been obtained by phone; note "per phone call" and initial.

ACT GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION

Documentation, which must be on file at the school, must be written by the diagnosing professional(s) and must meet **ALL** of these guidelines:

1. **States the specific disability** as diagnosed
 2. **Is current** (no older than September 2005)
 3. **Describes the presenting problem(s) and developmental history**, including relevant educational and medical history
 4. **Describes the comprehensive assessments** (neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluations), including evaluation dates, used to arrive at the diagnosis:
 - *For learning disabilities*, must provide test results (including subtests), with standard scores and/or percentiles, from
 - a) an aptitude assessment using a complete, valid, and comprehensive battery,
 - b) a complete achievement battery,
 - c) an assessment of information processing, **and**
 - d) evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out.
 - *For ADD/ADHD*, must include
 - a) evidence of early impairment,
 - b) evidence of current impairment, including presenting problem and diagnostic interview,
 - c) evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out,
 - d) results from valid, standardized, age-appropriate assessments, **and**
 - e) number of applicable DSM-IV criteria and how they impair the individual.
 - *For visual, hearing, psychological, emotional, or physical disorders*, must provide detailed results from complete ocular, audiologic, or other appropriate diagnostic examination.
 5. **Describes the functional limitations or impairment (e.g., adverse effect on learning and academic achievement) resulting from the disability**, as supported by the test results
 6. **Describes specific recommended accommodations** and provides a rationale explaining how these specific accommodations address the functional limitations
 7. **Establishes the professional credentials of the evaluator/diagnostic team**, including information about licensure or certification, education, and area of specialization
- Complete details about ACT's policies for documentation of requests for testing accommodations are available on ACT's website at:
www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html.

RELATED INFORMATION

Request forms are processed in the order they are received at ACT. Request forms received after the deadline will be considered **only** for students who began attending your school *after January 1, 2009*, and **only** if complete. **No new forms will be accepted after March 6, 2009.**

1. Requesting Additional Information. ACT may, at its discretion, request additional documentation to support any request. If ACT has a question, the Test Accommodations Coordinator at the school will be contacted. Documentation must be submitted in writing — a fax reply will assist in meeting deadlines.
 - a) If a request originally submitted by the February 2, 2009, deadline is not approved, the student may apply for State-Allowed Accommodations instead. All Applications for State-Allowed Accommodations must be received at ACT by April 1, 2009.
 - b) If a request originally submitted by the February 2, 2009, deadline cannot be approved by March 25, 2009, and the student does not apply for State-Allowed Accommodations, the student must test with standard time limits and use a regular type (10-point) test booklet *without* accommodations.
2. Notification of Accommodations Approval. ACT will send to the school's Test Accommodations Coordinator an authorized accommodations letter for each student approved for accommodations on the ACT. If a request is not approved, ACT will send written notification to the school along with a copy of the Application for State-Allowed Accommodations and instructions for completing it.
3. Accommodations Testing Window. The accommodations testing window is April 22-May 6, 2009, for those students who were approved to test with extended time or multiple-day testing.
4. Assignment of Test Materials. ACT assigns specific test materials (by serial number) to each student. **Only the authorized student may use the materials; they may not be used by another student, or transferred to another test site.**
5. Administering the Test. ACT will provide specific instructions and will assign a timing code to each student. **Students with different timing codes may NOT test in the same room; students approved for a reader's script must test individually; and ACT-Approved Accommodations must be administered separate from State-Allowed Accommodations.** If ACT procedures are not followed, the resulting scores will be cancelled.
6. Preparing for the ACT. A copy of *Preparing for the ACT*, which includes information about the tests, test-taking strategies, and complete practice tests, is available. Schools have a supply of this free regular type booklet for distribution to students. Many schools have previously ordered a copy of a practice test in Braille, large type, or on cassettes or audio DVD for their libraries. If your school does not have copies available, you may order library copies of these alternate format practice tests directly from ACT at no charge. (See order form included in this mailing.)

ACT REPEAT TESTING

Students approved for accommodations may, at their option, apply to take the ACT again with the same approved accommodations.

1. During Spring 2009. ACT has adjusted its usual 60-day ACT retest restriction for the state administration. Grade 11 students who wish to take the ACT with extended time more than once during the spring may do so, as follows:
 - Students who can test with regular type or large type materials with up to 50 percent additional time may request to test with accommodations **once** during the testing window for ACT accommodations **and** may also apply for ACT Extended Time National Testing on the April 4, 2009, National Test Date. To apply, students must submit a completed Application for ACT Extended Time National Testing postmarked by February 27, 2009.
 - Students whose disabilities require Special Testing (e.g., more than 50 percent additional time, alternate formats, or testing over multiple days) may request to test with accommodations **once** during the testing window **and** may also apply for and test via ACT Special Testing during the months immediately before or after the statewide administration. To apply, students must submit a completed Request for ACT Special Testing. If the student wishes to take the ACT in April, the request form must be postmarked by February 27, 2009.
2. During 2009-2010. Students who have been approved for ACT accommodations for the spring statewide administration and wish to retake the ACT with accommodations during the 2009-2010 academic year will be eligible for a streamlined request process.

These students will first need to determine which of the following options is appropriate to their disabilities:

- ACT Extended Time National Testing for students who normally use up to 50 percent additional time and regular type or large type test booklets; **or**
- ACT Special Testing for students who normally use more than 50 percent additional time, test over multiple days, or need alternate test formats (e.g., Braille, audiocassette or audio DVD, or a reader).

These students will need to submit the appropriate 2009-2010 ACT request form with only Side 1 completed, along with a copy of their authorized accommodations letter from the statewide administration of the ACT. This process will eliminate the need for completing Side 2 of the form and will streamline review of the request in light of prior approval. Requests for additional or different accommodations require a new request form completed in full with documentation to support the new accommodations.

